



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

MEMORIAL SKETCH OF GENERAL JOHN MANSFIELD.

BY H. D. BARROWS.

(Read June 1, 1896.)

Since our last stated meeting, another member of this society, and one of its honored founders, has passed away. The death—which came with startling suddenness from apoplexy, May 6, 1896, of Gen. John Mansfield, removes from our midst an eminent citizen whose services to our community, to our commonwealth and to our common country, should be writ in large letters, for the profit and edification of his fellow citizens, who survive him; but more especially because of the wholesome influence, which the record of an almost ideal public life, always exerts on the rising generation.

Whilst this sketch of Gen. Mansfield's career, must, from the necessities of the occasion, be limited to a mere skeleton outline, nevertheless, there is every reason why it should be supplemented by a fuller and more detailed account of his military services in the war of the Rebellion, and of his political and civic services to the state of California. For there are abundant materials available for such a life at his death, and in public records, as well as in the memories of living persons who knew him, more or less intimately, for many years. And if properly written, it would be full of interest, and would, as I have said above, convey an admirable moral lesson which could be commended to the young without reservation; for, as the bar association of Los Angeles county so well and justly said in their memorial resolutions: "General Mansfield was distinguished for an interest in public affairs, *which did not have for its prime object the advancement of self*, but always showed itself in actions directed toward the accomplishment of purposes designed for the public good." In this selfish world, such characters are all too rare.

General Mansfield was a native of Monroe county, New York, and was 74 years of age at the time of his death. In early life he emigrated to Wisconsin, where he took an active part in public affairs.

In the winter preceeding the breaking out of the civil war (1860-61,) he organized an independent company of infantry for military drill, etc., which was known as the Portage City Light Guard. When Fort Sumter was attacked, he and his company of 100 men, were among the very first to volunteer their services in behalf of their country, in response to the call of the president for 75,000 men. Captain Mansfield left a wife and three small children to go to the war. His company became a part of the Second Wisconsin Regiment, which left Madison in June, 1861, 1050 strong, to

join the army of the Potomac, but which returned after completing its three years of service, with but 155 men, in addition to some twenty veterans who had re-enlisted, and forty five who had been wounded and had fallen into the hands of the enemy. In other words, this splendid regiment, which left Madison thirty-five years ago this month, more than one thousand strong, (by the way, Mrs. Carr with pathetic sadness told the writer at General Mansfield's funeral the other day that she remembered as if it were but yesterday, the departure of the regiment which included Captain Mansfield's company;) had been reduced by its three years service, to 220 men, all told. It took part in many historic battles. At Gettysburg it formed a part of the First Brigade of Wadsworth's Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac; and it opened the infantry fight in that memorable contest of giants which commenced on the 1st day of July, 1863.

The casualties of this regiment in that first day's fight, for the numbers engaged, were unparalleled in the history of any regiment during the war. The official figures were:

Number engaged, officers 29; men 273; total 302; officers killed, 2; men killed, 25; total 27; officers wounded, 11; men wounded 142; total 153; officers missing, 6; men missing, 47; total 53; total killed, wounded and missing, 233; left for duty, 69.

Early in the engagement Colonel Fairchild was wounded, and the command devolved on Mansfield. Later in this three days battle, he was wounded and was taken prisoner, and sent to Libby prison, where he remained four months, when he was exchanged.

Gen Mansfield was several times promoted for gallant and meritorious services in battle, and was finally brevetted as brigadier general; and at the close of the war he was placed in command of the reserve forces stationed in and around Washington, remaining in the service thereafter two or three years.

Mrs. Mansfield and two sons, survive the general. The family settled permanently in Los Angeles over twenty years ago.

General Mansfield was a prominent member of the second constitutional convention of this State; and he was elected as the first Lieutenant-Governor under the new constitution formulated by that body; and as presiding officer of the Senate, he did the State valuable service. The vicious legislation which had often been made possible by the enactment of bills without reading or only reading by titles, had induced the convention to insert a provision requiring all bills to be read in full three times before final passage. But the first Senate, and probably both houses, proceeded to read proposed bills merely by title, when Lieutenant-Governor Mansfield as President of the Senate, insisted—and it became necessary for him to make a decided stand—that this provision of the Constitution must be literally

construed, otherwise all legislation under that instrument was liable to be invalidated and infinite mischief would follow. And so finally, at the commencement of the session of the Legislature, both the Senate and the Assembly adopted Lieutenant-Governor Mansfield's interpretation of the Constitution, and thus the danger was avoided. In after years, Governor Mansfield recounted to me, and as I thought with justifiable pride, the stand he took in this matter, because it prevented, before it was too late, as he believed, the grave evils that would have resulted from having doubt cast on early legislation by loose and unwarranted constitutional interpretation.

General Mansfield was most highly esteemed by the community, but he never sought office after the expiration of his term as Lieutenant Governor. Nevertheless, he at various times was appointed and served as a director of the Public Library of this city, as a trustee of the State Normal School (two terms;) and as president of our Historical Society. In the latter he took a lively interest from its founding till his death. He was particularly jealous of its good name which he did much to build up. He had the true historical spirit, and believed with Macauley, that "those who take no interest in their ancestors, do not deserve to be remembered by their posterity."

General Mansfield will meet no more in the flesh with our Society; but his Memory will be cherished, not only by the living members of this Society, but by the community at large, who will miss his venerable, manly figure and fine personality, with which our people have been familiar for so many years. Peace to his ashes! and benisons to his memory!